

state does not occur, according to gaming status. In either state, it is required for a player to stop and display a predetermined winning combination along a pay line in order to actually win a payout of coins. A typical gaming machine has a plurality of winning manners with different pay amounts. There are a "CHERRY" winning combination and a "BELL" winning combination as small winning combination, and a "big bonus" winning combination as a bonus winning combination, for example.

**[0014]** Winning combinations are associated with their respective pay amounts in a pay table displayed on a display panel to be seen by a player (see, e.g., Japanese Patent Laid-open Publication No. 6-261972). The display panel is comprised of a transparent acryl board and a translucent cell sheet printed with winning combinations and pay amounts superimposed on the acryl board. The graphics are illuminated by light such as a fluorescent lamp from within the gaming machine. A typical slot machine has a plurality of display panels as described above. Specifically, the slot machine is provided with a reel display panel having in its middle a display window through which a player can see reels provided within the gaming machine, an upper panel having a smaller area than the reel display panel provided above the reel display panel, and a lower panel usually printed with characters of the pachi-slo gaming machine and the name of the machine, provided below the reel display panel.

**[0015]** In a typical pachi-slo gaming machine, the same material is used for the cabinet and the front door in view of production efficiencies and costs. Display panels are printed with patterns according to the theme of the machine, serving to differentiate the gaming machine from other gaming machines.

**[0016]** Display panels are printed with different patterns for different machines. If products are left unsold, for example, display panels of the products cannot be used for other products, unlike the cabinet and the front door, resulting in a bad inventory. The assembly of the product requires the step of mounting the display panel unit to the front door, resulting in an increased number of production steps.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

**[0017]** It is an object of the present invention to solve the problem of bad inventory caused by production of different display panels for different products, reduce the number of steps conventionally required for assembling display panels, and provide gaming machines with good cost performance.

**[0018]** A gaming machine according to a first aspect of the present invention comprises a variable display unit for variably displaying a plurality of symbols; a selector for selecting a winning combination; and an electrical display provided above the variable display unit.

**[0019]** In this invention, the electrical display constitutes an upper panel display provided above the variable display unit, on which various kinds of game information including pay tables, character images and a name logo are displayed. The electrical display may be a liquid crystal display, CRT display, electroluminescent display, plasma display, or the like.

**[0020]** The above configuration can solve the problems of bad inventory and increased assembly steps caused by use of

physical acryl boards and pictorial cell sheets for display panels, resulting in the provision of gaming machines with good cost performance.

**[0021]** According to a second aspect of the present invention, the gaming machine further comprises a translucent electrical display provided in front of the variable display unit.

**[0022]** The reel display panel generally has a central portion made from a transparent glass plate or acryl board to allow rotary reels provided inside the cabinet to be seen. In this invention, the translucent electrical display is provided in front of the rotary reels to enhance the displaying effects. On the translucent electrical display, various images are displayed with variations in game state.

**[0023]** The above configuration allows appropriate display of various symbols on the reel display panel on which fixed symbols have conventionally been displayed, and provides a reel display panel with the visibility of reel symbols by use of the translucent electrical display for the electrical display.

**[0024]** According to a third aspect of the present invention, the gaming machine further comprises a special game controller for generating a special game state which gives an advantage to a player based on a predetermined condition; in which, the translucent electrical display executes a shielding control for making the variable display unit invisible to the player during the special game state, based on a prescribed condition.

**[0025]** The translucent liquid crystal display enables effective display control in conjunction with reel movement control in a special game state which gives advantage to a player. When the special game is an ST game in which a player is given advantageous information about a stop order, for example, translucent control is executed only for a reel to be stopped and shielding control is executed for the other reels, which is an exemplary possible displaying manner.

**[0026]** The above configuration allows a player to play an ST game without turning the eyes from a video display on which a stop order is displayed to reels to perform a stopping operation in the ST game, reducing fatigue of the player. Instantaneous switching between transmitting and shielding can be done according to game states and shielded areas can be controlled by software, so that more detailed display control becomes possible.

**[0027]** The above configuration can solve the problems of bad inventory and increased assembly steps caused by use of physical acryl boards and pictorial cell sheets for display panels, resulting in the provision of gaming machines with good cost performance.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0028]** FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the outside of a pachi-slo machine according to an embodiment of the present invention;

**[0029]** FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of a front door;

**[0030]** FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a main control circuit;

**[0031]** FIG. 4 is a block diagram of a sub control circuit;

**[0032]** FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an image control circuit;